

REPORT

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

When a parent, guardian or custodian inflicts or allows the infliction of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment.

- Physical abuse includes non-accidental physical injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns, cuts or other injuries.
- Sexual abuse occurs when sex acts are performed with children. Using children in pornography, prostitution or other types of sexual activity is also sexual abuse.
- Neglect occurs when children are not given necessary care for illness or injury. Neglect also includes leaving young children unsupervised or alone, locked in or out of the house, or without adequate clothing, food, or shelter. Allowing children to live in a very dirty house which could be a health hazard may also be considered neglect.
- Emotional abuse of a child is evidenced by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or improper aggressive behavior as diagnosed by a medical doctor or psychologist, and caused by the acts or omissions of the parent or caretaker.
- Exploitation means use of a child by a parent, guardian or custodian for material gain.
- Abandonment means the failure of the parent to provide reasonable support and to maintain regular contact with the child, including providing normal supervision, when such failure is intentional and continues for an indefinite period.

WHO MUST REPORT?

Any person who reasonably believes that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect that appears to have been inflicted on the minor by other than accidental means or that is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental in nature, or who reasonably believes that there has been a denial or deprivation of necessary medical treatment or surgical care or nourishment with the intent to cause or allow the death of an infant who is protected under A.R.S. § 36-2281, shall immediately report or cause reports to be made of this information to a peace officer or to Child Protective Services in the Department of Economic Security, *except if the report concerns a person who does not have care, custody or control of the minor, the report shall be made to a peace officer only.*

The following persons are required by law to report:

- Any physician, physician's assistant, optometrist, dentist, osteopath, chiropractor, podiatrist, behavioral health professional, nurse, psychologist, counselor or social worker who develops the reasonable belief in the course of treating a patient.
- Any peace officer, member of the clergy, priest or Christian Science practitioner.

- The parent, stepparent or guardian of the minor.
- School personnel or domestic violence victim advocates who develop the reasonable belief in the course of their employment.
- Any other person who has responsibility for the care or treatment of the minor.

A person making a report or providing information about a child is immune from civil or criminal liability unless such person has been charged with, or is suspected of, the abuse or neglect in question.

A person acting with malice who either knowingly and intentionally makes a false report of child abuse and neglect or who coerces another person to make a false report is guilty of a crime. A person who knowingly and intentionally falsely accuses another of maliciously making a false report of child abuse and neglect is also guilty of a crime.

When to report?

A report should be made when any person, who reasonably believes that a child under 18 has been abused, neglected, exploited or abandoned. A report of suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment is only a request for an investigation. The person making the report does not need to prove the abuse. Investigation and validation of child abuse reports are the responsibilities of child protective service workers.

If additional incidents of abuse occur after the initial report has been made, make another report.

How is abuse reported?

A report can be made to the CPS Statewide Toll-Free Child Abuse Hotline at 1-888-767-2445, (1-888-SOS-CHILD) or law enforcement office.

When reporting, the following information if known will be requested:

- name, age, and gender of child and other family members
- address, phone numbers, and/or directions to child's home
- parents' place of employment
- description of suspected abuse or neglect
- current condition of the child

What happens to the report?

A CPS Specialist will investigate the report through interviews with all children in the home, parents, friends, relatives, and any other person who may have information about the child and family.

After investigation, if CPS has reason to believe that a parent guardian or custodian abused or neglected a child and intends to confirm this, a letter will be sent to the person accused explaining how an appeal of this decision may be requested and how to get a copy of the CPS report.

What services are available through Child Protective Services?

Day Care, Parent Aide, Medical and Psychological Examinations and Evaluations, Shelter Care, Counseling, and other administrative and support services.

Remember: A report of suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment is a responsible attempt to protect a child.